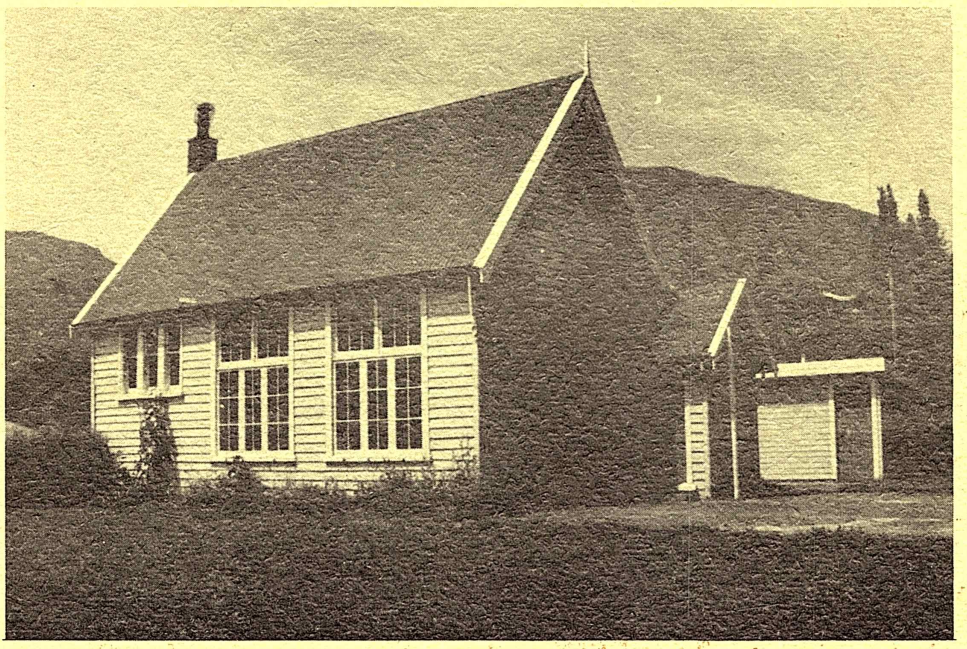
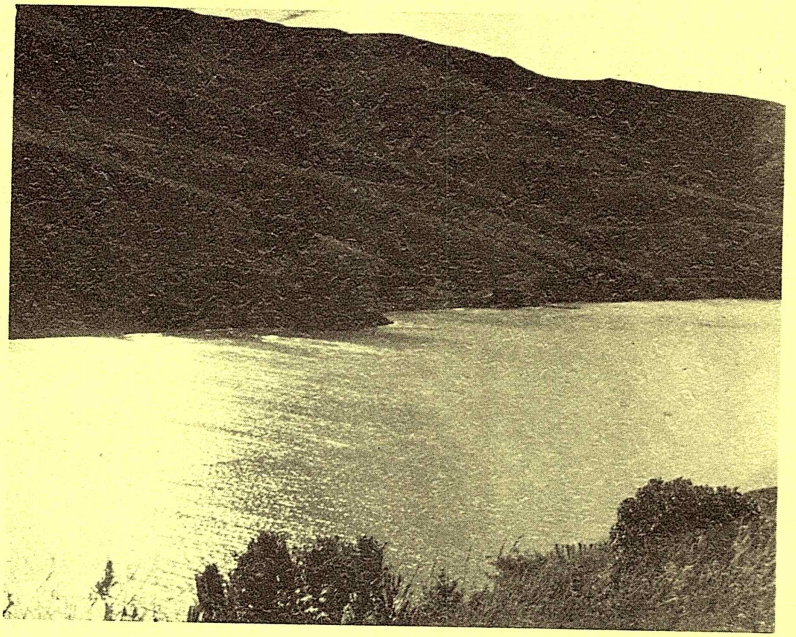
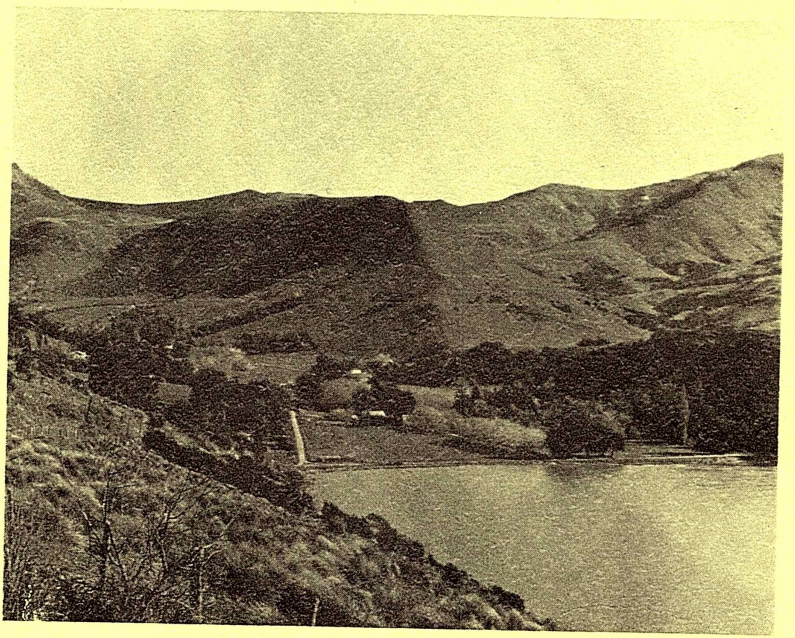
PORT LEVY SCHOOL

1877 - 1977



Centennial Reunion





PORT LEVY SCHOOL

CENTENNIAL REUNION

1877 — 1977

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

On behalf of the Centennial Reunion Committee of the Port Levy and Native Schools, it gives me great pleasure to extend greetings to all ex-teachers, ex-pupils, ex-committee members and well wishers of the school to our Celebrations.

We regret that in 1972 the school was closed due to lack of pupils but are proud that the original School building, though changed a little from when some of us knew it, still stands as a true memorial of the past 100 years.

To the members of the Committee, the Secretary and Treasurer, thankyou for your help and support and to the many other people for helping to make this reunion a success.

We trust that fond memories of the past will be recaptured with the help of this booklet and that it will serve as a useful souvenir of the occasion.

L. E. Jenkins

REUNION COMMITTEE

Chairman:	Charles Jenkins
Secretary:	Beryl Jenkins
Treasurer:	Lesley Barnett
Committee:	Brenda Steele, Ralph Jenkins, Ted Howden, Owen Jenkins, Richard Coop, Philip Helps, Bill Haley and Rob Turpin.

Programme

Saturday 9th April 1977

1.30 pm	Roll Call. Photographs. Cutting Cake. Afternoon Tea.
6.30 pm	Gather at School for Drinks.
7.00 pm	Dinner.

Sunday 10th April.

11.00 am	Church Service.
1.00 pm	Hangi.

TEACHERS AT PORT LEVY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr. Henry Jaggar	June 1877	– December	1883
Miss Julia Aldridge	Dec. 1883	– July	1887
Miss. A. Drake	July 1887	– July	1889
Miss Sarah M. Craig	July 1889	– Sept.	1893
Miss Kate M. Martin	Sept 1893	– March	1899
Miss S. Morton	May 1899	– May	1902
Miss M. Forbes	May 1902	– Oct	1902
Miss R.M. Barker	Oct 1902	– March	1904
Miss E M. Lake	Mar 1904	– Feb	1907
Miss R. Bunz	Feb 1907	– June	1908
Miss A.E. Handley	Sept 1908	– July	1913
Miss Mildred Clarke	July 1913	– Sept	1915
Miss L. Charles	Sept 1915	– Oct	1916
Miss M. O'Donell	Oct 1916	–	1921
Miss A.E. Dix	1921	– Aug	1937
1930 Miss Dix married, became Mrs. A.E. Flaherty			
Mr. John Glen.	Sept 1937	– Aug	1940
Mr. E. Brain	Sept 1940	– Feb	1943
Mrs. Brain	Feb 1943	– Jan	1944
Mr. E.A. Webb	Jan 1944	– June	1945
Mr. M. Watson	June 1945	– Dec	1948
Mr. W.D. Timbrell	relieved till April.		
Mr. R.G. Griffiths	May 1949	– Dec	1951
Mr. L.W. Ford	Feb 1952	– Dec	1956
Mr. L.E. Kerr	Feb 1957	– June	1960
Miss Anticich	relieved from June until Sept 1960		
Mr. J.R. Dravitzki	Sept 1960	– Aug	1963
Mr. Robert Newby	Sept 1963	– Aug	1965
Mr. A.S Rush	Sept 1965	– Dec	1969
Mr. T.A.J. Bartle	Feb 1970	– May	1970
Mr. Aubrey Stevenson	May 1970	– Dec	1972
		when school closed.	

TEACHERS AT PORT LEVY NATIVE SCHOOL which opened 1924.

Mr. H. Field	1924	– 1925
Mr. F.C. Freeman	1925	– 1930
Mr. G.F. Brown	1930	– 1931
Miss M.E. Manihera	1931	– till school closed October, 1932.

CHAIRMEN OF PORT LEVY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The first Chairman when school opened was Mr. G.S. Fleming, no records until 1898 when the retiring chairman was Mr. R.J. Fleming.

Harry Field	1898 – 1903
John E. Fleming	1903 – 1913
Harry Field	1913 – 1915
Len M. Wilson	1915 – 1917
Basil Ware	1917 – 1920
Frank Jenkins	1920 – 1921
H.A. Logan	1921 – 1922
A.W. Page	1922 – 1928
E.H. Harkerss	1928 – 1931
L.H. Field	1931 – 1940
G.C. Richfield	1940 – 1942
G.C Saxton	1942 – 1943
W.S. Coop	1943 – 1953
A.E.P. Kilian	1953 (11 months)
D.G. Helps	1953 – 1955
C.E. Jenkins	1955 – 1963
J.A. Howden	1963 – 1965
O.G. Jenkins	1965 – 1971
Graham Steele	1971 until school closed December, 1972

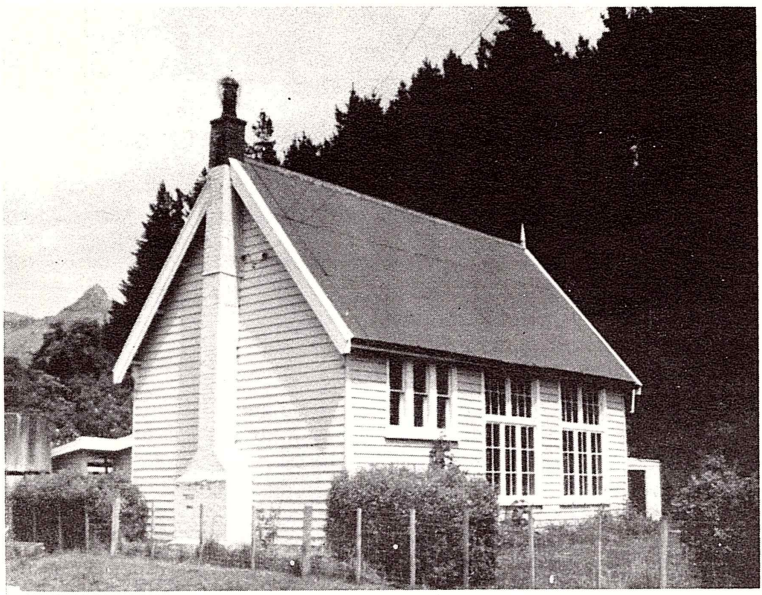
PREFACE

As no School Committee Minute books prior to 1898 can be found, the compiling of this early record has proved quite a challenge. Also with the death recently of Mr. Lewis Field, who as a former pupil, and school committee chairman for many years, had the interest of the school and its pupils foremost in his mind at all times, we lost a good friend and a valuable source of information.

My sincere thanks to the staff of the Education Board office for their help in tracing records of the Native School, loaning of rolls etc.

Thanks also to Rev. Leicester and Mrs. Kyle for compiling the available material gathered together, into book form.

Charles Jenkins.



The Port Levy School

Introduction

Much of the life of any district centres around its school, particularly if a large proportion of its residents have children attending that school. The Port Levy school has been no exception. It has served the children and parents of the district for nearly one hundred years. It was hoped that the school would remain open until its Centenary, but sadly, low roll numbers brought about the school's closure in December, 1972.

In the early 1870's the Hon. W. Rolleston was a member of a commission appointed to collect information on the state of local education on Banks Peninsula. In 1876 the Provincial Government made a donation of £9.16.4 to the Port Levy district for a school.

The 1877 Education Act established a national system of public schools in New Zealand and the Provincial Government was no longer responsible for education in the Canterbury province. Education was now compulsory between the ages of seven and

fourteen years. By March 1877, the building of the Port Levy school was under construction, and on June 18th of that year the school opened with a roll of fifteen children. The first teacher was Mr. H. Jaggar, who was paid £10.16.8 per month reduced in 1881 to £9.15.0. The total cost of the new school was £621.15.0. Mr. A.R. (Dick) Fleming owned the site on which the school was built, he either gave or sold the land to the Board of Education.

THE SCHOOL ROLL

On June 18th, 1877 the school opened with a roll of fifteen, and it seems to have remained about this number for some time. Parents were told in 1901 that if the roll dropped lower than the thirteen pupils then in attendance, they would have to pay £65 per annum towards the Teacher's salary.

In 1920 many more children were on the roll, though the attendance of the Maori children was generally not satisfactory mainly due to the distance to be walked from the Pa. The school committee acted as a deputation to interview the Education Board concerning the advisability of building a school at the Pa. By 1924 the roll at the main school was large, and the Native School (as it was called) was opened in the Maori Hall with 16 pupils. This school remained open until October 31st, 1932 when a reduction in the number of children at the Pa forced its closure. The Maori children had then to attend the main school.

The next mention of roll numbers appears in 1948, when the school had 23 pupils, 1954 saw 21 children enrolled and in 1957, 31 attended the school. 33 were expected by the end of 1957. Conditions were overcrowded and the local Member of Parliament Mr. T.H. McCombs, the Minister of Education at the time visited the school to investigate the possibility of extending the building and making it a two teacher school. This population boom was part of a country-wide phenomenon, and all of the Peninsula schools had greatly increased rolls for a period of three years or so. From September 1957 to December 1958 three sets of twins were attending the school the Grennell girls, the Steele boys and the Haley's boy and girl.

In March 1968, 15 children attended the school, Mr. A.R. Rush, the then sole-teacher, reported that the roll would be going down in the

next two years but that numbers would be sufficient to keep the school going. The decrease in roll numbers caused the Education Board to defer the proposed new school building; June 1970 saw a roll of nine children, several of which were the teacher's and the school was forced to close in December 1972.

THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The school committee is of vital importance to the workings of any school, but the more so in an isolated country district. On reading the past minutes of the Port Levy School Committee, we find it had to ensure the adequate heating of the school, provide equipment for educational and sports programmes (and with this the raising of funds), and deal with the numerous day to day things that arose, such as broken windows, plumbing, school picnics, etc.

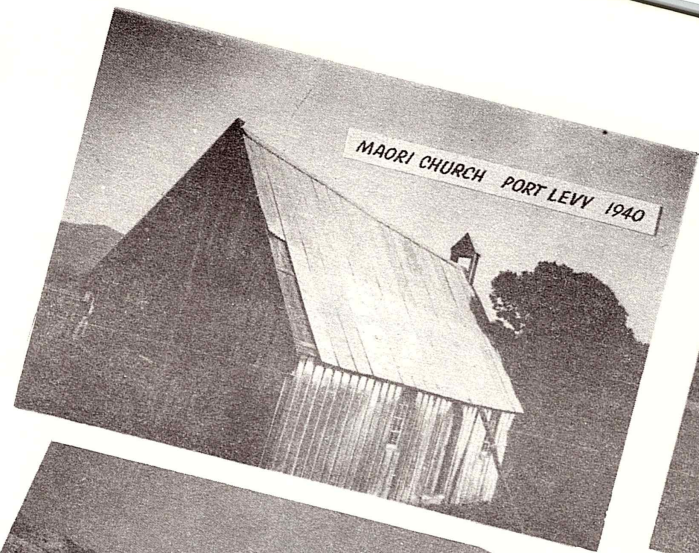
One of the first recorded jobs of the committee in 1877 was to pay Mr. L. Radcliffe £21.7.7 for fencing the school playgrounds. In 1888 the school was painted by a Mr. L. Dyer for the sum of £23.15.0. In 1891 a colonial oven was purchased for the school house.

A letter was received in 1902 from the Okains Bay School Committee, suggesting 'that examinations on the Peninsula be held between September and November; at present they are held after the long Christmas and grass-seeding holidays, when the children are not at their best.' (Agreed).

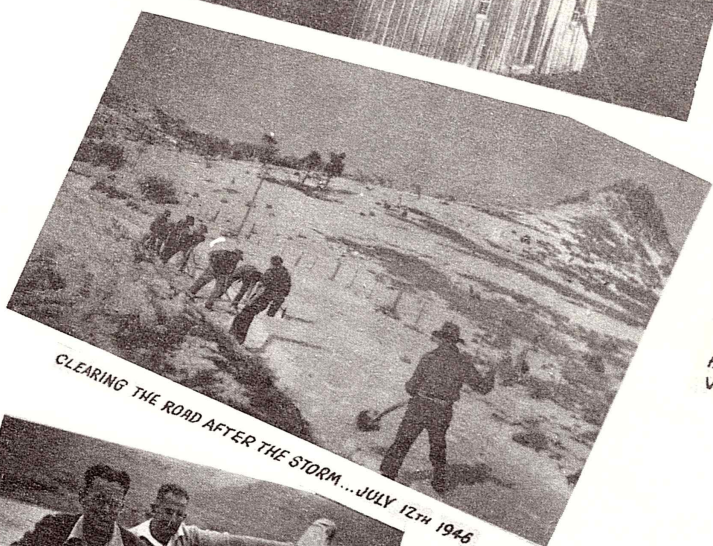
One of the recurring difficulties any Port Levy school committee has had to face, has been the water supply. There was no fresh water at the school in 1902 and the children had to go down to the creek. A rain water tank was installed in 1909 as it was considered dangerous for the younger children to go near the creek. In 1957 the District Health Inspector was asked to examine possible pollution of the school water, and in Nov. 1960 a new supply was in operation, from a spring on the property of Mr. Blunden.

Sometimes the Committee has had health problems to attend to, for the good of the pupils. In 1921 an outbreak of measles at the Pa caused concern. 1925 was the closing of the School on account of a nation-wide poliomyelitis epidemic. Lessons were printed in the daily papers, and the finished lessons then taken to the teacher for marking, on a roster system, which prevented pupils from meeting those from other families. Another outbreak occurred in 1947, the school was

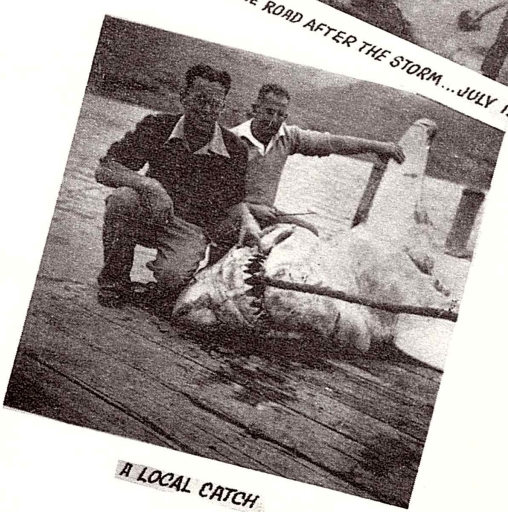
Continued Page 10



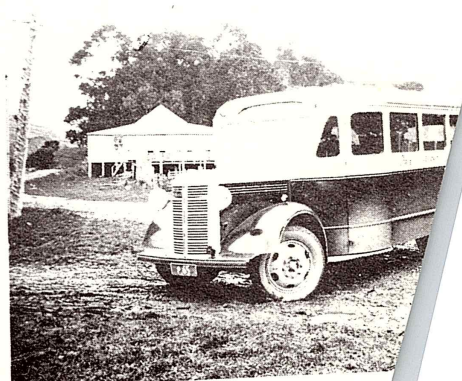
MAORI CHURCH PORT LEVY 1940



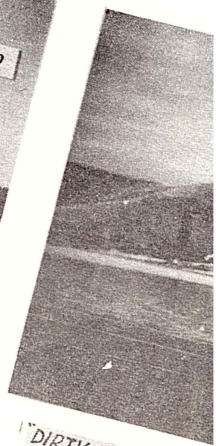
CLEARING THE ROAD AFTER THE STORM...JULY 12TH 1946



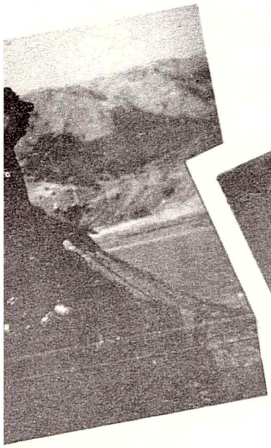
A LOCAL CATCH

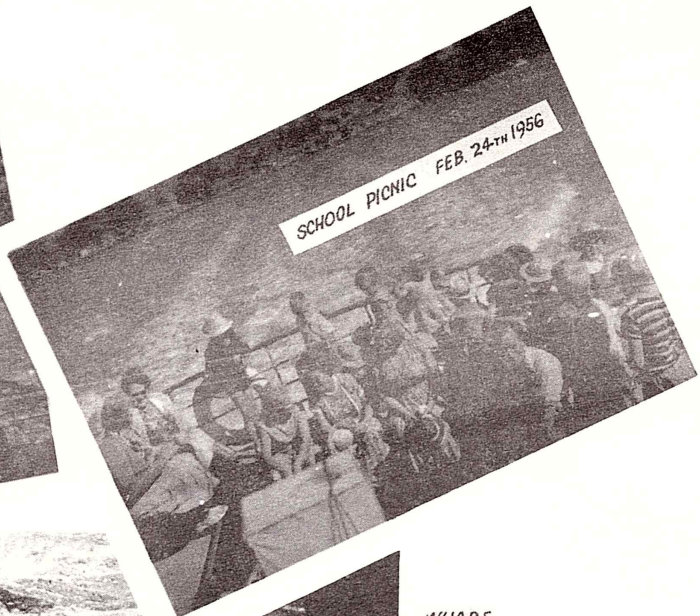


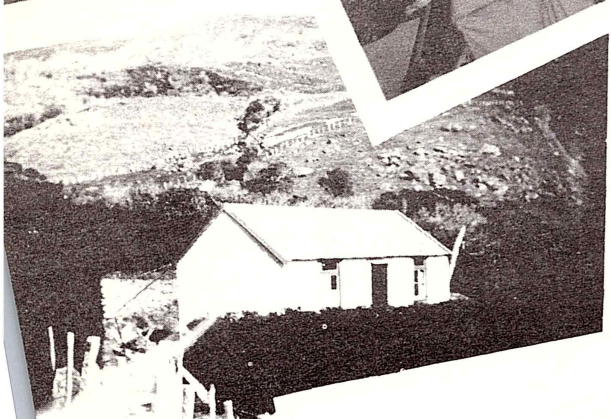
PORT LEVY'S FIRST MAIL



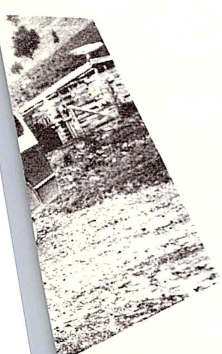
"DIRTY MICK." QUITE A CHARACTER AND A WELL EDUCATED MAN WHO WAS ONCE IN THE NAVY. HIS REAL NAME WAS HENRY CHARLES STIMSON. DENNIS GLOVER WROTE A POEM ABOUT HIM WHICH WAS TELEVISED TWO YEARS AGO.



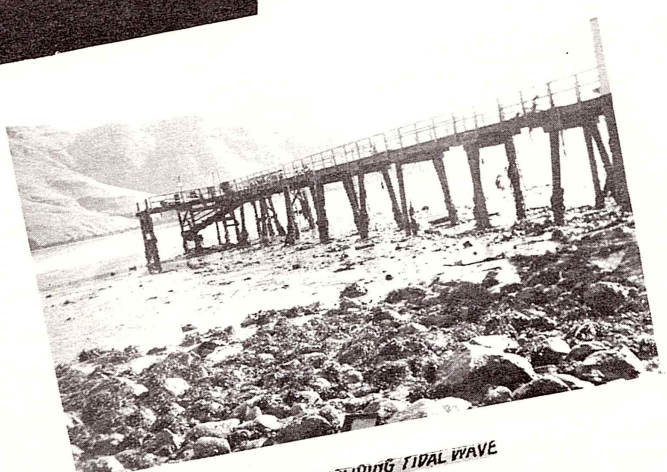




WHARE
WHERE DON PRIEST LIVED
(Gate on left hand side
to be right of way)



SSENGER BUS

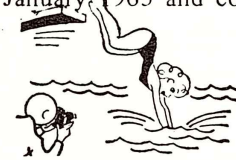


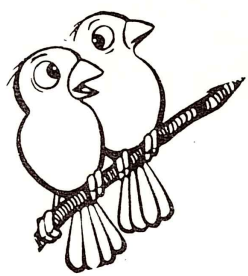
PH JETTY DURING TIDAL WAVE

closed at mid-day on the 8th. December, after a broadcast by the Health Department; and did not re-open until 1st March, 1948. In 1954 the Committee urged T.B. tests for the children. The School Dental Service was instituted at Lyttelton in 1944, and it was the Committee's responsibility to see to the transport of the children to Lyttelton and the clinic.

As a result of a request from the Diamond Harbour School Committee for donations towards their proposed swimming pool, an enthusiastic member of the Committee, offered a substantial donation towards a Port Levy Learner's Pool and canvassed the district for support. After a discussion in November 1962, it was decided to engage a contractor to build a 30' x 15' learner's pool plus filtration plant.

Construction was commenced in January 1963 and completed by 1st February 1963.





As the years went by contributions of time and effort were made to the School by so many people. Parents helped by transporting children to Peninsula Inter-school Sports' Days, Learn-to-swim Sessions and various other School Trips. The teaching of sewing, tennis and basketball was undertaken by dedicated Mothers and one could fairly say that the progress and success of the School and its pupils, was a result of a genuine interest and concern, by all the residents in the Bay. The School Picnic was always a high spot in the year and thoroughly enjoyed by young and old alike.

Mention must also be made of our past School Teachers and their families, who had a special contribution to make in a district, such as ours, almost totally dedicated to farming; Mait Watson for his work and interest in St. Paul's church, John Glen who ran his car, as a school bus, to the Pa to encourage a more regular attendance; Archie Rush for his efforts in establishing the school Library and for his excellent bachelor dinners, to mention but a few. The Teachers' wives, also assisted in many ways, a number taking the sewing class or acting as school cleaners. One teacher's wife, hearing of the proposed flight over the Peninsula, of a British Comet, rang the R.N.Z.A.F. and suggested a change in the course, for it to fly over Port Levy for the benefit of the children.

Much of the School Committee minutes make interesting reading, and in their own way illustrate the scientific, economic, and social changes in New Zealand over the last 100 years.

BUILDINGS:

During 1935, after repeated requests from the Committee, the school windows were lowered, two of the three high windows along the front, were removed and fitted in the back wall, being replaced by larger modern ones. At the same time, a ceiling was erected in place of the original high or church-like, peaked structure.

In 1939, a new school house was built and the old structure was sold to Mr. R. Turpin, who removed it and built a woolshed from the sound totara and matai timber.

A substantial toilet block and store room was erected in 1967.

As the Port Levy School building was one of the oldest in use in the Board's district, the building of a new school was proposed by them in 1967. In March 1969 plans were available and a tender was accepted in September 1969, just three years before the school was closed; however the project was deferred in December 1969 because of a decrease in roll numbers.

BEES:

Bees were reported in the school porch in 1901, in 1914 they forced the closure of the school until March 9th. A letter was written to the Apiary Instructor regarding the bees in the school and the church. This is the last mention of the insects in the school minutes, but residents are still familiar with the hum of their descendants around St. Paul's Church porch. The church bees must have more spirit, for they still survive with undiminished vigour.

SOME FEMININE STATISTICS:

Out of the 95 years of teacher service at the school, 54 years have been given by women teachers.

Mrs. J. Glen in 1938, was the first woman on the School Committee.

SCHOOL SAVINGS:

In 1971, the Port Levy School won the Post Office Saving Shield for the smaller schools, with its 100% record of every child banking, on every savings day. Mr. T. McGuigan, M.P. for Lyttelton and Mr. E.H. Grandi, the deputy Chief Postmaster, attended the presentation function held at the School in March, 1972.

MR. L.H. FIELD:

Mr. Field was most helpful to the school in many ways; for some years he encouraged the Arbour Day plantings and gave talks on those days. In 1963 he opened the School Learner's Pool and he and Mrs. Field undertook to pay any outstanding debt required for the pool. Despite the low temperature, Mr. Field and the chairman had the first swim.

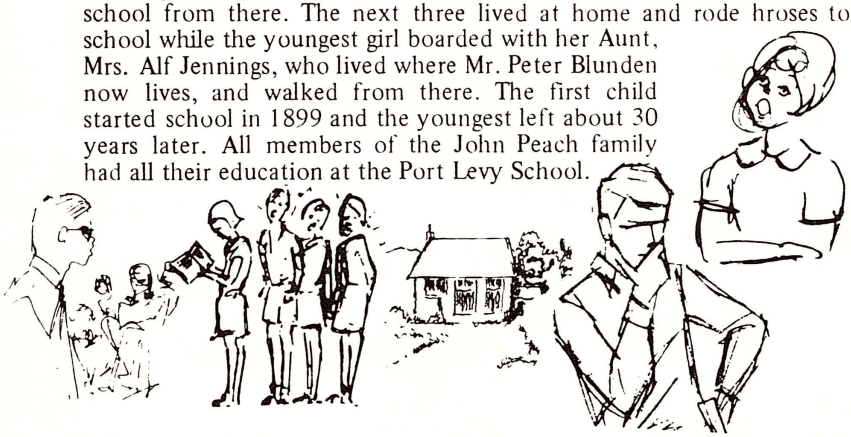
SCHOOL BRIDGE:

The pupils from Eastern Valley, known then as Bob's gully walked over the hill and crossed a bridge behind the school house to attend school. This bridge prior to approximately 1923 was a safe sound structure consisting of a long wooden plank with netting sides which was about five feet above the water. However a flooded creek removed the bridge and the eastern approach and all that was saved was the large plank which was continually being re-erected by the older children, across and just about a foot above the water until the next flood. Mr. Peter Flaherty eventually secured this structure with wire to one shore so a flood would not remove it completely. While this so called bridge was down, children crossed on willow trees or when the creek was low, on the stones. Eventually in the early 1930's another bridge was built which one climbed on to up steps to the top of a hawthorne hedge then across to the higher bank. However this eventually met with the usual fate and the stones were again resorted to until the mechanical age caught up with Port Levy and the children rode round the road to school on bicycles.

JOTTINGS:

During the 1920's the Mail and Freight Service was by sea round Adderley Heads from Lyttelton and was run on 3 days a week by Mr. H. Grennell. Prior to the opening of the Native School, the Pa children would sometimes walk home from school to Field's wharf and catch the 5 pm boat across to the Pa. This boat ran at this time on Mondays and Fridays but on Wednesday, which was Addington Sale Day, it was one hour later, 6 pm. Another alternative route for the Pa children was to walk across the bridge and over the hill which brought them on to the road adjacent to R.J. (Bob) Fleming's large hay shed, this being almost full with loose hay made a great playground, until they were chased out by Joe Loader, a retired butcher who bached in the Owhetoro woolshed quarters and was responsible for the feeding out of this hay to horses etc. At a signal from an observer, the children would escape via two large windows opening on to the road side, while Joe was opening a gate and the barn doors. There was also an apple orchard down the road, which may have had visitors.

Mr. John Peach lived on and farmed a property called Wild Cattle Hill, which is on the summit of the road between Port Levy and Pigeon Bay. He had eight children who all attended the Port Levy School. The eldest four boarded with their grand-parents who lived in the old Fleming Cottage across the creek from Owhetoro dairy, and walked to school from there. The next three lived at home and rode hroses to school while the youngest girl boarded with her Aunt, Mrs. Alf Jennings, who lived where Mr. Peter Blunden now lives, and walked from there. The first child started school in 1899 and the youngest left about 30 years later. All members of the John Peach family had all their education at the Port Levy School.



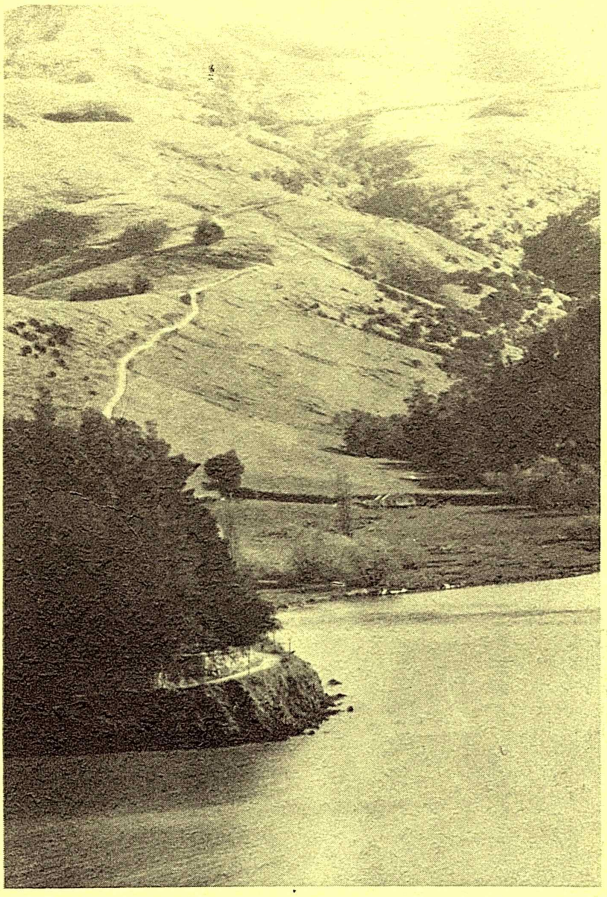
Don the oldest son of Mr. C.S. Priest, who with his family lived at that time, in a two-roomed whare at the end of Eastern Valley Road, walked to school two or three times a week; a distance of over three miles each way. Occasionally, he was able to ride home with his father in a three horse wagon, which was returning from delivering a load of broad-leaf firewood to the jetty.

Mr. Frederic Cecil William Robert Freeman, who taught at the Native School for about 5 years, had in his youth suffered from infantile paralysis and as a result, one of his legs was paralysed causing a bad limp. However, despite this disability he walked about five miles each day, to teach school.

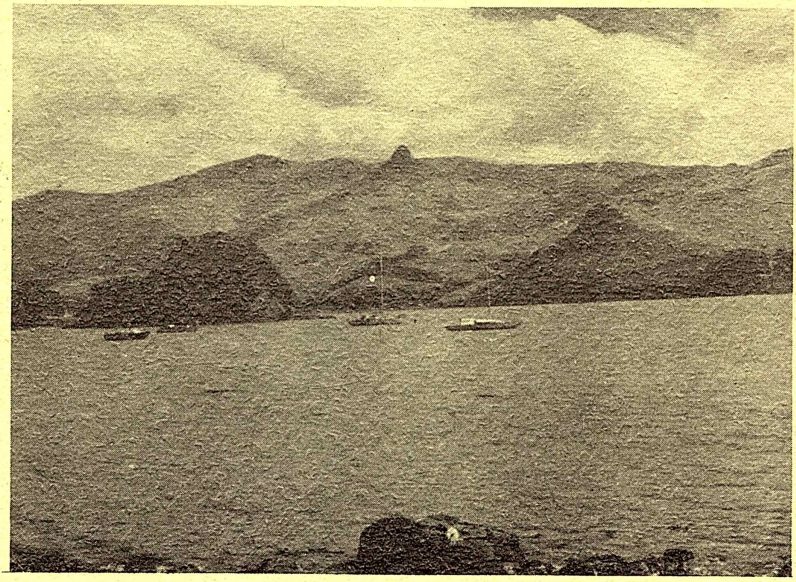
Very small numbers were attending Householders' Meetings, quite often no more than one or two plus the existing School Committee. On one occasion when the official biennial meeting clashed with a private function, the then Chairman decided, that as so few parents were interested he would call the meeting for a later date. This caused a real uproar in the district but had the effect of a record attendance when the meeting was held.

Autographs

Notes



Port Levy . . . made when earth was moulding forms
To trace with graceful shape for life to be.
With hills and bays well sheltered from the storms.
And there the living write a history.



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